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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2598
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1820
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1944
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0523
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1221
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1578
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RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4431
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: MUJURU SEEKS MUGABE'S RESIGNATION

REF: HARARE 200

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) An advisor to General Solomon Mujuru reports that Mujuru, in a meeting March 10 with President Robert Mugabe, urged Mugabe to step down, Mugabe declined, subsequently telling the press that Mujuru supported him and not presidential candidate Simba Makoni. Mujuru is now attempting to rally ZANU-PF politburo members to put additional pressure on Mugabe at a scheduled Wednesday politburo meeting to resign. Mujuru continues to actively support Makoni, although he has not come out publicly. He believes MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai is now the favorite of voters; Makoni will use the upcoming holiday weekend to 'blitzkrieg' the country to build support. In the event of a runoff between Mugabe and Tsvangirai, the Makoni forces will urge support of Tsvangirai--the paramount objective is a change in leadership. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Tirivanhu Mudariki, a political advisor to Mujuru and Mujuru's principal business partner, told PolEcon chief on March 17 that Mujuru had met with Mugabe on March 10 and urged Mugabe to resign. He told Mugabe that he had little support in the country; resignation would avoid an electoral humiliation. (COMMENT: Mugabe subsequently told the press Mujuru was supporting him and not Makoni, but this was clearly not the case. See Harare 200. END COMMENT.)

3. (C) Mudariki stated that ZANU-PF had a politburo meeting scheduled for March 19. Mujuru was in the process of lining up members to place additional pressure on Mugabe to resign. There could be "fireworks" at the meeting, If Mugabe did not step down, there could be additional and public ZANU-PF defections to Makoni by the end of the week. Mudariki hinted

that Mujuru would soon make his support public. He had not done so earlier for fear of jeopardizing his wife's position as vice-president. (NOTE: We have also heard that Mujuru is concerned that his going public with opposition to Mugabe could result in his prosecution for corrupt business practices. END NOTE.)

¶4. (C) Mudariki told us that Mujuru, who was an active supporter and advisor of Makoni, had been traveling extensively throughout the country to gauge Makoni's support. Mujuru had concluded that the MDC's Tsvangirai had the most support of the three major candidates. Mudariki acknowledged that Makoni's core support now came from intellectuals, the middle class, and youth in the urban areas. He said Makoni planned a "blitzkrieg" campaign this weekend throughout Zimbabwe to try to introduce himself to rural voters.

¶5. (C) Mudariki was confident Mugabe would be defeated: "He has no support." In the event of a runoff between Mugabe and Tsvangirai, Mudariki believed Makoni supporters would back

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Tsvangirai. He commented that the major objective was to

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change current leadership, even if the result was a president with whom he and like-minded individuals differ in significant areas.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Mudariki's comments on the relative strength of the candidates tracks what we have been hearing in pre-election trips around the country. Mugabe's support within the official ranks of ZANU-PF has been steadily eroding and rural voters are disenchanted with the leadership that has resulted in their present predicament. Makoni is still relatively unknown in many areas of the country; his ability to increase his support will depend on leaders such as Mujuru going public. It appears increasingly the case that Mugabe can save his presidency only through massive rigging. The unanswered question is how his opponents would react to such rigging. END COMMENT.

MCGEE